

## Back to School Tips:

### Parents of Middle School Students

Here are 5 tips to help with your child's transition to middle school—and hopefully make it a better experience for both of you!

**1. Back to school clothes** – Be aware of our dress code: Skirts and shorts must be at or longer than your fingertips; Tank tops must be more than 3 fingers wide at the shoulder; Chests need to be covered; No undergarments should be showing. If your child is not following dress code, don't be surprised if they need a change of clothes. Help the school by not allowing your child to dress out of code when they walk out of the house, or encourage them to bring a change of clothes if you aren't sure an outfit will be acceptable.

**2. Contacting your child's teacher** – Feel free to contact your child's teachers, but treat that teacher with the very same respect you expect to receive. Ask yourself, "What is my goal?" If it is to express anger and frustration about what the *teacher* is NOT doing, reconsider your approach. Make sure your goal is to help your child, not place blame on the teacher. Middle school is a time when the school is encouraging students to take ownership of their responsibilities, so often teachers are trying to encourage the development of this habit.

**3. Homework, quizzes and grades** – Encourage your middle school student to put forth his/her best effort. Be involved with organizing their backpack and developing a plan to complete tasks. Help your child. And let your child fail from time to time. This is the practice for high school. If you bail your student out and never let her face consequences, she will never learn how to problem solve. When your children can be their own advocates, solve their own problems

and figure out solutions, they gain self-esteem and important life skills.

4. **Your child's social life** – Do not be the cool parent. Be the parent that sets limits and boundaries. It's OK to say "no," to question and to disapprove. Set boundaries now and follow through on consequences. The role of the parent is not to be the friend, but to teach children to have respect for limits so they can be responsible and productive.

5. **Enjoy your child** – It will be a crazy and fun ride. Tears and hugs, slammed door and raucous laughter plus hormones and moves toward independence are all waiting for you. Love your child and know that sometimes she may reject you so that she can eventually come back to you.

Adapted from <http://www.chicagonow.com/tween-us/2013/08/8-tips-for-junior-high-students/>